

## Book of Reviews

Classic Games .....	2
Adventure Games.....	4
Maze Games.....	6
Space Attack .....	8
Arcade Games.....	10
Asteroids .....	11
Scramble .....	12
Flight Simulations .....	13
Sport Games .....	14
Address File..	15
Games Glossary .....	16

# CLASSIC GAMES

**SHARP**

Computer & Video Games' very own contributor, John Bell, has come up with the goods on Sharpsoft's version of Othello.

Complete with loud beeps, every time it makes a move, the machine plays a very good standard of Reversi and defeated all my attempts to force it into submission.

Even reading John's column on the subject and obeying his guidelines with regard to certain squares and understanding what the computer was up to didn't help.

It had a particularly frustrating habit of turning the tables on me at the end of a game just as I thought I had won an uncertain position.

The screen presentation is simple as Sharp graphics force it to be but samplings such as Othello and it is a very playable game with a good response time. Only buy if you can stand to be beaten. It costs £6.80.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability

**SPECTRUM**

Reversi, or Othello as it is often called, is a nineteenth century game of territorial acquisition. Strategy and skill are needed to win.

Two versions of the game are currently available for the Sinclair Spectrum and both run on the unexpanded machine. One is by Micros Information, for Sinclair Research, and the other has been written by Microw, based at Worthing, Sussex.

The Sinclair version comes in a very pleasant package, the cassette insert is colourful and packed with information. Beginners should soon become well versed in the game by simply reading it.

The program loaded without any problems and ran immediately. The game is fairly standard, but with many interesting features.

To begin with, there are nine skill levels, with a three-second response time at level 1.

You can challenge the computer, with either the Spectrum or yourself starting, or you may play against a friend with the computer acting as umpire.

If you are a beginner, you may

## Fine and motion

The classic board games transfer well to computers who make better than average opponents on all the games dealt with here.

But there is more to choosing a chess, backgammon, draughts or reversal program, than picking one which will beat you every time.

Most important in these programs is the display line is clear and easy on the eye, coupled with pieces which can be easily recognised. Programs which are disturbing about clashes at body shaped pieces will hardly help a player trying to give careful study to a critical position.

The program should also draw a player's attention to its move. Both on screen and visual signal should be included to let the player know it's moving and which piece it is changing.

A good response time is crucial. If left to its own devices it's long enough most computers can come up with a good move. But move study should be the bane of a player's programme — computers are used for their speed.

Finally on easy-to-understand, and intelligent, the user input system will ensure that the program does not start gathering data after the first few tries. Is there it difficult to come up with anything better than E2-E4 but this can easily lead to a mistake which is still a valid move and completely take a player's chance.

Few programs allow the player to take a move back, try and find one that does.

Other key things to consider with regard to chess: does the program always respond to P-Q4 opening the same way? If so you're in for a dull opening repertoire. Does it play forced moves quickly? Does it keep its head when things go wrong? See programs just give up on bad positions.

TERRY POATZ

- 7 Review a sample game at your leisure  
 8 Half way through a game you may change sides, and at the end of one you may review all the moves of the game

The graphics are lax, and there is even a facility to change border, paper and ink colours to your requirements. All in all, this is a most magnificent game.

I wish I could say the same for the Microw version. The purchase is great, but by a most unappealing package bearing the company's name and the program title.

After sorting out the loading problems, which I have never had with any other cassettes, I was confronted with a page of confusing text which would leave the beginner completely bemused.

The game itself has a rather unattractive screen display, and makes average use of colour.

When I tried the program on a mono chrome television set, the players' pieces were almost indistinguishable. The program is written in Basic, and there is only one skill level. The computer's moves are average, about equal to the moves of level one on the Sinclair cassette.

The computer does not check it an opponent has had in pass, and if "pass" is pressed without a move being keyed in, you turn is overlooked.

For my money the Sinclair cassette has to be my choice. Microw Othello is no comparison to Sinclair Reversi, and I would not even consider purchasing one. Sinclair Reversi is available at £7.95 and Microw Othello at £3.50.

- Sinclair Reversi**  
 ● Getting started  
 ● Value  
 ● Playability

- Micros Othello**  
 ● Getting started  
 ● Value  
 ● Playability

The growling growly voice of Oakdale's Chess program does not add much to the game.

However, its sharp comments on the current state of play do give this program a slightly more human feel.

There's a surge of pride each time it finds itself in more difficult than it expected and says so on screen. And for being roundly criticised for a queen sacrifice, "That was a pathetic move!" I enjoyed making it five moves later all the more.

The program does respond quickly at the lower levels, but does not play a particularly good opening and has a tendency to capitulate utterly when things start going wrong.

Still, it will give beginners a hard game and will probably hand out more beatings than it takes.

The presentation on the Spectrum is a problem and the screen takes some getting used to. With several of the pieces barely recognisable from their board equivalents. While good chess players know by colour and position where the king and queen start a game, novices will not have such a clear idea. Probably a bit too grommicky for the

more serious chess enthusiasts and perhaps not enough thought for the complete beginner to help him around the little things most of us take for granted. It costs £8.95 and runs on the 48K model.

- Getting started 6
- Value 8
- Playability 5



The Spectrum's graphics face a severe test when asked to produce a good chess board with easily distinguished pieces.

So far I have yet to see a board which is easy on the eye and doesn't have at least two piece symbols too close for comfort. The Pawn game, which comes courtesy of Microgen, seems to have trouble with pawns and bishops and I had to look hard in some positions to spot a bishop hiding in a pawn chasm.

Given the problem and the usual difficulties with keying in the E2 E4 format, which usually causes me problems when keen to play a good move with black, it's a pity the game does not include a facility to allow you to change mistakes.

Many an interesting position went down the drain when I simply mispressed a square and sent a rook, pawn or queen into a dangerous position instead of the one I intended.

Still this Pawn game is probably the best Spectrum chess around so if you can learn to live with these short comings, you'll manage to get some decent games out of it.

The levels are D9 and levels one, two and three all play e-lesl and few games.

The program allows you to set up a board position to play from and I particularly enjoyed the chance to turn the screen position and moves so far onto the Spectrum monitor. Current games can also be used on cassette. The game costs £7.95.

- Getting started 8
- Value 8
- Playability 7



**VIC-20**

Buy Byte is offering its lowest priced Vic Chess game I have come across but you will need to have at least 16K worth of memory expansion on your basic machine. It also takes a step in the right direction by getting away from the over used notion of chess levels. Instead the Buy Byte programmers ask the player 10 input a three figure number from

3-8.99 to determine the play.

The number before the decimal point is the number of moves it looks ahead at each position. The number after the point refers to the number of positions the computer will consider at each play.

Of course if you start getting ambitious then the computer begins eating into huge amounts of time as it considers vast amounts of data before replying. In play at the lower end of the scale it produced some difficult to understand moves.

The display of the pieces is also a little simplistic and the king and queen symbols are initially confusing. It costs £7.00.

- Getting started 9
- Value 7
- Playability 5



Boss plays chess on the Vic 20 only with the aid of an 8K expansion to the Basic memory.

But it is a marvelous piece of soft ware with levels 0 to 8 taking you from a one second to a four hour response time.

There is a good book opening built into the program and it stayed within a known variation usually to the sixth or eighth move on most familiar openings.

Boss also screens on the display, which is more than just adequate — it is produced with a venturesome flourish. It accepts smiles in four key strokes and will also inn chess clocks on both players which offers the additional challenge of trying to beat the computer while taking less time than it does.

A couple of cautions though: it is difficult to spot the computer's last move as the pieces don't flash after moving and the tape was not a first time loader. It costs £14.99 and is distributed by Andiegic.

- Getting started 6
- Value 9
- Playability 8



Chess in a 3.5K memory is what Cam modems are offering for the basic Vic 20.

The catch is that it comes in cartridge form with the attendant rise in price to £21.70.

But you do get value for money. The game top scores in our getting started category with a simple plug-in operation and a comprehensive booklet explaining what can and can't be done on each of the six possible levels.

The program has a good pedigree, with the Sargon name behind it and is based on the Sargon II program first devised for the Apple.

The board display is neatly distinguished and the six levels well

spaced out with an almost instantaneous response at the lowest level.

It plays a good game and it's very hard to beat; this will put together package except on the price.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



ZX81

Arbit's 1K Chess is an attempt to get a complex strategy game into the minimum of memory space and as such can only be a compromise.

To make this compromise too much he had to be left out. You are not allowed to Castle, capture on peasant or even promote your pawns and to crown it all even a victory is not acknowledged by the computer. You'll have to spot it for yourself.

The board is little more than an 8x8 square of spaces and inverse spaces with the pieces represented by their initials either in white at black or in black on white. This is the cause of confusion later in the game, when pawns become forgotten.

Worse still it keeps moving its pieces around the board while it makes up its tiny 1K mind what its next move will be.

Still it does play chess — just — a can hardly be called achievement in 1K.

This is not so much a game as a feast of programming which, in itself, ought to make 1K Chess a collector's item. It does not just succeed in playing chess but doesn't expect to play too many memorable games on it. Just admire the thought and dedication which made such a thing possible.

A considerable achievement for only

2.95.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



Backgammon is a three thousand year old game of chance and skill for two people. This Psion/Sinclair version for the ZX81, is most impressive.

The cassette is well packaged, with the user containing five pages of information including the history, rules and all other aspects of the game of backgammon which are relevant to beginners and experts alike.

The program loaded without much difficulty.

These are four skill levels and the game can run in fast or slow mode. The simply means that if the computer is taking its turn and it is in fast mode, the screen goes blank and it makes up its mind four times faster. The 81 plays an adequate game at level 1, and plays astoundingly well at level 4.

The graphics are adequate, with normal and inverse 'C's representing the two players' pieces. Entry of moves is very simple, as is accepting or rejecting the doubling cube — which the computer controls very well.

You only have to press one key, and the ZX81 always asks you to confirm your entries.

Backgammon costs £5.95 from Sinclair Research. There is a Once program on side B of the cassette.

- Getting Started
- Value
- Playability



DRAGON

Dragon Games 1 and 2 are tape com pandums for the new micro from J. Merriam Micros of Leeds.

All the games are written in Basic and a general deal can be learned by the would-be games programmers who find time to study the listings.

Ochello, or Dragon Games 1, plays a standard game but it does not give any instructions or rules. Breakout is the second game on this tape and in this version of the arc machine you play against the clock to score as many points as possible. A conventional but not used — you simply fire your projectile using the space bar.

Moondancer is the third game on tape one and is a lovely good representation of this well known computer game. Awin is a copy of the African national game, which for the uninitiated is played with pebbles. Numbers are used to display the counters, but like Ochello you are not told how to play the game.

The final program on Dragon Games 1 is called Reilles. In you task is to find

hidden treasures. A sleeping dog guards the treasure rooms. This is a short graphic adventure — and although simple I found it quite addictive.

It costs £5.95.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



BBC

If you're a keen Reviver — also known as Obulic — player you'll get extra value for money playing BBC Publications' version for the BBC Model A or B.

The games of Galesy, Gomoku and Mastamind are all included on the same tape, which goes mad in the name Strategy Games for the BBC micro.

The Reverse game features a will produced but simple display and I found the move entry system of Intervis appealing in all the legal positions very easy to cope with. The game plays to a high standard but is not unbeatable.

With the other three games it's good value at £10.00.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



ATARI

Strip Pokin is a game for the adults who are finding it Space Invaders, Pacman and all the rest. More precisely it's a game for men as it features two modal girls gambling their clothes in a computerised round of poker.

Sezi and Melissa each have their own style of play. One is a skilled poker player the other is fairly napt. The game requires a large amount of memory — 40K — and runs on the Atari 400/800 with a disc drive. Versions will shortly be available for the Apple.

For people who are likely to be trying the game out at work it has the sensible device of being able to block out the screen at any time. Useful if your boss or the children turn up uninvited in the computer room!

Strip Pokin is manufactured by Alfie of Hayes, Middlesex and retails at £27.50.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



# ADVENTURE GAMES

ATARI

This is your chance to play sleuth for an afternoon as you are challenged to solve the Murder At Awesome Hall.

Colonel Awesome lies dead on the floor of his 20 room mansion.

You must find out who did it, in which room, and with what murder weapon.

Claues in the shape of an on-screen map of the mansion's first floor and ground floor

After entering a room pressing "0" enables you to find out who or what is in a room. If any of the Colonel's associates are in the room you can question them.

The computer will also give you a list of suspects, extra clues if you need them, and the solution for the completely exasperated.

This game is not usually exciting and if you do not like solving puzzles can become rapidly boring.

The game runs on a 16K Atari and is available from Celeste Computers at £14.95.

- Getting started 8
- Value 5
- Playability 5

SPECTRUM

Faust was a German who sold his soul to the devil, and hid many treasures.

The player is led near to the treasures and must then find them. The creatures encountered in the quest are mutants from long ago.

That is the setting of the game, which although mainly text, is accompaned by mini-pictures of the objects as they are mentioned.

The screen during play has varied colours, which combined with some simple sound effects make for a quite pleasing Adventure from Abex of London for the 48K Spectrum at £4.95.

- Getting started 10
- Value 8
- Playability 8

This series of adventures display as plain scrolling black text on a pale yellow background, the conversation scrolling continuously up the screen.

In itself this is acceptable. But is spoilt by the fact that when a lot of conversation has been held at one place

## Childhood fantasy

Adventures is what all small boys — and most bigger ones — long for. Remember all those childhood books that took you into a world of excitement and fantasy? Didn't you, like me, wish you were one of the famous Few?

Adventure gaming will take you one step nearer to your dreams, in the comfort of your own home.

Originally written for large mainframe computers, these games have now been brought to the masses via the micro. Adventure are being published in ever increasing numbers for every gaudy machine.

An Adventure game makes you the world-beater. You move about him and leaping to another, examining things, pick up and manipulate objects, and solve puzzles. Set off the time dooms lurks and baddies comes may strike at any time.

You goal may be anything from collecting priceless treasures to saving the world from disaster. You become part of the story, the computer waiting to calculate what your actions will achieve while the plot devised by the author.

Don't expect fancy graphics in an Adventure — although there are some Adventures. Expect words. Your imagination will provide the pictures — just like it does when you read a good book. And like a good book, you will find it just as difficult to put down.

When buying an Adventure first discover if the scenario and degree of complexity suit your taste. Game reviews will help here. Find out if the speed of the game is right for you as there is a great deal of variation.

From my experience a minimum of 16K of memory is required for a decent adventure and from there on up the bigger the better. A "save game" feature is useful as it enables you to return to a game where you left it at a later stage without having to leave the machine running all night.

If your computer has sound and colour these will enhance a game. Better the graphics a good game is enough.

KERTH CAMPBELL.

and the location details have long since disappeared, there seems to be no way of recalling them. The lack of a cursor can also be confusing.

Planet of Death, for the 16K Spectrum, sets you down on an alien planet where your space ship has been captured and disabled. You must find it and escape.

The environment here seemed just like earth to me — very mundane. Most things I tried to do proved impossible or went unrecognised. A weak theme and frustrating game.

Inca Curse, for the 48K Spectrum, puts you in a South American jungle outside an Inca temple. Thus you must explore and return with as much treasure as possible.

Quite a good game with plenty of exploring to do, no points to score, but a disaster from an educational point of view.

Spelling is obviously not the author's strong point! I came across "vandal" as an "enemy", and "hygrophilic".

The publishers claim 3200 to be the maximum number of points to have been scored to date. Could that be the total number of spelling errors in the game?

In Ship of Doom which runs on the 48K Spectrum you are in a space ship which has been drawn into an alien cruiser by a Gavitron beam. The aliens are sounding up humans to turn them into endroids.

Your mission — to press the main computer control button to free your ship. There are endless corridors and rooms to zoom about, with some strange devices whose purposes are not obvious.

The controls button easily loued, but covered by seemingly unbreakable glass! Quite an interesting adventure, if glass is for you!

Espionage Island, again for the 48K Spectrum, puts you under pressure from the start. You are in an aircraft which has been shot at, and you can see a parachutist and lover. Your mission is to find the secret of the island on which you were spying from above, but first you must get there.

The island is populated by natives and hides a guarded camp.

Are the things you find in the wreckage of your aircraft a clue? Can you penetrate the camp? And will you be able to return to your secret certain base? Quite an exciting Adventure.

This series of adventures from Arkin Computing at Hull, seems to improve alphabetically! I can hardly wait for Adventure 'E'. The Adventures cost £8.95 each.

Planet of Death

- Getting started 10
- Value 6
- Playability 8

Ship of Doom

- Getting started 10

■ Value	6
● Playability	6

Inca Curse

- Getting started 10
- Value 6
- Playability 5

Espionage

- Getting started 10
- Value 7
- Playability 7

At last a sensible 007 adventure! The mode of play is quite different from most Adventure games, successfully re-creating the world of James Bond on a computer.

You are 007, of course, and M takes you to 0 to choose your weapons.

You then repeatedly select destinations from a list of cities around the world and the micro takes you there.

On arrival you may be offered a ride by a mysterious taxi, or given clues in the form of one letter of an acronym to enable you to solve where a missing jet with a nuclear bomb has disappeared to.

Meanwhile, you must save London from a threat of destruction by Dr Death.

An original presentation, from Richard Sheppard Software at Maidenhead, with authentic 'feel' of a James Bond novel. It costs £8.50.

- Getting started 5
- Value 7
- Playability 9

As The Hobbit loads, an illustrated title page is displayed, either like the cover of a book.

Indeed the book *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien is supplied as part of the package, and it is advisable to read this before playing, since the game follows the theme quite closely.

Another booklet describing how to play the game is provided and includes hints on the plot and how "English" the command language works.

To play the screen is split in two. A "communication window" at the bottom scrolls independently from the "adventure window" above which gives details about the location and action.

On his first visit to a location the player is rewarded with a colour illustration of it.

The action is continuous, once The Hobbit is played in real time.

- 6 The creature goes about the business whilst the player is thinking
- 3 Whilst hand-scratching it is progress
- 10 It is quite likely that more messages

4

Computer & Video Games Book of Reviews





This seemingly hopeless task can be achieved by the most logical amongst us as the Wumpus leaves clues to its whereabouts. In fact every cavern within two caves of his lair bears the trail of the creature.

By noting these, the player can often logically deduce the whereabouts of the creature.

Other hazards in this maze of caverns and passages include some pits which offer death just as certainly as the Wumpus itself and a bat who bores grudges against those who disturb it.

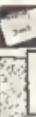
The bat will suffer intruders once but, on entering his lair a second time, the player is grabbed and deported elsewhere in the complex.

Among the different levels of the game it is possible to attempt to track down the Wumpus in a particularly difficult and twisting series of tunnels. Or, the very brave may even elect to go Wumpus hunting blindfold.

A computer maze game with a long history, Wumpus brings the art of logical deduction to life but offers a pinch of luck which means that sometimes the odds are with the Wumpus. If you like walking out of mazemaze problems, you'll probably enjoy Wumpus hunting.

The cartridge costs £18.95 from Texas Games.

- Getting started 9
- Value 7
- Playability 8



ATARI

Larry Bean is a plumber with the Rodent Rooster Plumbing Service who installs pipes throughout the levels of Rat Alley.

This is a maze race game of the Pacman type. Instead of ghosts you are chased by giant rats.

To keep down the rats you are supplied with two cats and two traps. Trouble is the cats are scared motion less and the traps only hold the rats for a few seconds. Although the cats will scare some of the rats there is a breed of super rats running around in this maze who will simply set the cats

Predicably replacement cats and traps are dropped in the centre of the maze and these must be picked up quickly before they disappear.

Once you have plumbled one maze completely, another maze commences with smarter rats.

It costs £22.95 from Gemline Electronics.



Atari Pacman is probably the most authentic arcade-to-home computer conversion ever made, rivalling Acornsoft's Snapper and Commodore's Jelly Monsters.

Books, records, T-shirts, telephones and even suspender belts have all been marketed in the US carrying a motif of the cat's little yellow goblets.

Computer gamers need no introduction to Pacman but for the initiated it is a case of running around a maze gobbling pellets, bonus fruits, and power pills whilst dodging the four ghosts that are in hot pursuit.

Not to be played if you have an appointment, Pacman runs on an Atari 400 or 800 and is available in cartridge format from most Atari stockists at around the £30 mark.

- Getting started 9
- Value 6
- Playability 9



VIC-20

With the disappearance of Bug Byte's excellent version of Pacman for the Vic 20 under the threat of legal action from Atari—the owners of the Pacman copy right—Puckman is one of the few authentic versions of the game left.

Puckman has all the principle features of the arcade game. The ghosts chase you through a maze full of dots which you must eat up as you go along. If you eat the power pills in the corners of the maze you can eat the ghosts.

Every so often a bunch of charms appear in the centre of the maze which are worth a lot of extra points.

The graphics are surprisingly clear considering that the game is written for the unexpanded Vic.

My main criticism is that the Pacman is difficult to negotiate through the maze as the keys that move him tend to stick.

Once you press a key to move him he will continue in that direction even when you take your finger off the key.

Puckman is available from Marvis Associates at £5.50.

- Getting started 8
- Value 7
- Playability 6



BBC

Acornsoft seem to be undertaking a one-company campaign to prove that the BBC is the best games machine around.

They've proved their point to me. Snapper is a Pacman variation which is very close to the arcade game and every bit as playable.

Only keen arcade fans will notice the difference between Snapper and the original. It has a slightly different maze layout but the ghosts make this just as difficult among the new layout.

Frogs follow the arcade pattern and the Snapper still has four corners to run to in times of stress so he can turn the tables on his opponents.

The tunnel leaching off action is also there and you have a high score facility as well as the usual catchy tunes. Man versus arcade fare at £9.95.

- Getting started 7
- Value 8
- Playability 9



# SPACE ATTACK

## APPLE

Pilot the Starblazer on a mission to destroy enemy radar bases which are running your chances of a successful mission.

You can only bomb the bases from close range which is particularly difficult to do without crashing into the planets.

Points are also awarded for bombing the radar out buildings though you cannot fly to the next part of the mission until you have destroyed all the radar dishes.

Once the radar installations have been destroyed the Starblazer zooms up to the top right hand corner of the screen and misses two flashes up the message "destroy hyperspace tank". This, alas, is easier said than done.

First you must dodge or shoot a barrage of missiles which fly at you at great speed moving left to right across the screen. If you survive the lot you then attempt to dislodge the super sonic tank which – maddeningly – seems to be always out of your bombing range.

A most addictive "shoot 'em out" game.

Starblazer runs on an Apple II in 48K. It is available from Software House at £19.

- Getting started 9
- Value 7
- Playability 9



A dual sensation of light and sound are the two key attractions in a new 3D Apple space game from America called Zenith.

Year mission: defend the new space city which is being constructed to house the inhabitants of the old galaxy. The aliens are attacking. Sprawling towards you in colourful geometric shapes, Zenith is produced by the new American software house Gabbal.

The game impresses playability and superb graphics put it firmly in the highly recommended category with plenty of action.

It is available in this country from SBD Software at £21.50.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



## The meteor storm

Science fiction buffs have explored the galaxies from the comfort of their armchairs for decades thanks to authors like Michael Moorcock, Arthur C. Clarke and Frank Herbert.

Now there is an even easier way to stretch your imagination out into the stars – through the medium of home computer space games.

Yes we now the space hero battling against extraterrestrial life the destruction of the earth or travel the universe. Fill your imagination with beings with powers beyond imagination. In fact imagination is only limited to the type of program that you can create for your machine.

In this article we tell you some of the things to look for when buying a computer space game.

Whatever type of game you own, you may be sure that there will be a number of space programs to choose from.

Saying software by just means that you have to rely on advertisements when making your choice, but you can also choose from the ranks of cassette sets to tie-in local campaign books. And don't forget that magazines, like Computer and Video Games publish games.

It would be difficult to recommend a set type of space game program as many of the features are matters of individual choice.

Straight forward attack games in the Space Invader vein still have a lot of appeal and some of the latest series based on this theme are excellent.

Programs are available to take you into the realms of space invaders where deduction, strategy, memory and planning are as much a requirement as quick finger on the fire button.

More serious of arcade games like Defendar and Galaxies. In some not too far from a real selection, are fast, colourful, highly playable, and in some recent cases extremely authentic simulations of interstellar combat-

With the advent of the new generation of low priced computers, high standards are expected with this type of program. So seek for good graphics with clear instructions.

Where applicable the program should have high score facilities as well as good use of colour and sound. But the main points is look for an excitement and enjoyment without which the games will not hold you attention for long.

### PAT NOSSIS

## SPECTRUM

For sheer frantic action it's hard to beat conflict with the hordes of Winged Avenger from Workforce.

These outer space fiends dive out of the sky scattering bombs in all directions and challenging you to match their fearsome fire.

You are represented on the screen by a small laser base, with left and right control pins left and right.

A timer ticks down from 500 and you have to get rid of waves after wave of aliens. This can be done in two ways, by shooting them or by running into them while they spend time on the ground.

Both are equally addictive but as the aliens have a tendency to swoop down at your position regularly, it is possible to build up quite a score by merely staying still and letting them crash against you – I have wiped out whole waves without touching the controls.

There are speed levels from a sedate D to a hectic E and the aliens come in three waves. First the small round

variety, then enlarge green birds which can lose wings without being affected. And finally in a mother ship which contains a fuel cell if this is blasted the smaller the timer counts and you can start all over again.

Guaranteed to give you an aching wrist, Winged Avenger, unfortunately, doesn't have much scope for tactics. It costs £19.95 for the ZX Spectrum.

- Getting started 8
- Value 6
- Playability 4



Arctech is advertised as the "meanest shoot 'em up game ever" and it certainly does give you a weird and weirdish assortment of aliens.

They attack in alien waves of progressive difficulty and come in different shapes and sizes.

You can move from left to right across the bottom of the screen and also thrust forward.

The game makes good use of the Spectrum's colour capabilities but most importantly it lives up to the adventure merit blurb and gives you a good

addictive game of space attack.

Arcade is produced by the new Liverpool software house Images and is also available for the expanded Vic 20. Both versions are available at £5.50.

- Getting started 8
- Value 8
- Playability 8

## DRAGON

Dragon Demar 2 features Snake, Lander and Space invaders. All three are written in machine code. The first two use the highest resolution and are in black and white – but this does not affect the quality.

Snake is similar to the arcade version. The aim is to grow as many points as possible by shooting the snakes. You move your man around the screen using the cursor keys. He loses when you press the space bar. An outstanding and addictive game.

Lander is another interpretation of an arcade game. It's a standard version which gives you the choice of two landing pads – worth differing amounts of points. The cursor keys are used to control the craft – and this requires a lot of skill and practice. I found myself playing this game more than any other.

I could suggest a changing landscape as an improvement – otherwise it's an excellent adaptation.

Dragon users will be pleased to see the classic video game – Space Invaders – it's not running on their micro. Being in machine code, movement of the alien invaders is smooth. Although not as good as Dragon Data's own version on ROM cartridge, it is better value for money.

From J. Morrison Micros, it costs £5.95.

- Getting started 9
- Value 9
- Playability 8



Enclosed with my copy of Dragon Trak, produced by Selamander Software for the Dragon 32, was a short letter concerning the aims of the programme "to offer high quality professionally packaged software at a reasonable cost."

After a battle loading badly produced software from other companies I was sceptical about this claim. However, I am very pleased to say that my fears were unfounded. In fact I think Selamander deserved themselves their aim.

Dragon Trak comes attractively packaged with comprehensive instructions



in a thorough 18-page flight manual. This is a real base version featuring full colour tactical status and long range scanner displays, hyperprobes, tractor beams and Klingons. A lot of work has gone into producing this tape!

The various displays are all well designed and arranged — easy to read and understand.

The aim of the game, of course, is to wipe out the Klingon fleet. Using various keys you can call on your long range scanner, call up a damage report, go into warp drive, or send your hyperprobe ahead of the Enterprise to see what's going on.

On challenging a Klingon you can activate your defence screen and choose your weapons — phasers or photon torpedoes. Phaser fire is controlled by your on board computer and you direct a torpedo using your joystick.

When energy is running low docking with a starbase will recharge them and replenish your weapons.

Black holes and supernovae add to hazards as you journey where no man has gone before.

I find it difficult to fault this tape, but perhaps the explosions of Klingon ships could be a bit more dynamic.

Excellent presentation along with good use of the Dragon's facilities left me thinking — why can't all software come up to this standard?

At only £6.95 order your copy now — before they sell out! Sorry I have to go, my cat needs me.

- Getting started 9
- Value 9
- Playability 10



## BBC

Get a copy of the brilliant arcade game of Defender as you are going to get on a home computer.

That's Acornsoft's Planetsoids which runs on the BBC Model B if anything, it is slightly faster than the arcade original.

You have the scanner on the top of the screen to show the entire planet's surface, so sneaky landings don't grab humanity away from the main action without your knowing. The aliens and the sound effects are fantastically狂烈 and all the usual controls are there.

These seven necessary keys to control your craft take some getting used to and in moments of extreme panic I will find myself huddling down on quite useless parts of the keyboard.

board, but that's part of the skill of the game.

If you are a keen Defender fan from way back (about 1980) and are still not convinced that the old can be as close as I've outlined, let me assure you. The third tape often finds all three pods in smart bombing position on the screen and the programmer has even included Swarmer "steed" should you accidentally muscule onto the tactic. Merely yellows entertainment and pure addiction at £9.95.

- Getting started 6
- Value 10
- Playability 10



## ZX81

Invasion Force is an original and addictive game from Artic Computing of Hull. You are under attack from an alien command ship with a fleet of bombers which form the advance wave.

Below the ship is a wall, constantly moving from right to left obscuring your line of fire.

Your mission is to destroy as many bombs as possible earning 1000 points for each one downed. Ultimately you will have to gun for the base itself and this is pretty well impossible.

There are two levels of play — which is a bit of a mess as I would have preferred a third easier level.

My only other criticism is that after each game you must go back to the instructions. It would be better if you could simply press a key to continue.

Despite these drawbacks my overall impression was one of an enjoyable arcade game. It costs £3.95.

- Getting started 9
- Value 6
- Playability 7



## ATARI

Moonbase Io — pronounced eye oh — is an arcade-style space game. It is actually a combination of three games — inspired by the recent flights of Voyager 2 to Jupiter.

The "Io" in the game's title refers to one of the four major moons of the solar system's largest planet. Since Jupiter was discovered to be a large mass of in hospitable liquids and gases, unsuitable for landings.

This game uses the moon Io, Europa and Ganymede as moonbases for your

spaceship. This shows off bases, however, have upset the local bug eyed population and they are determined to send you back where you came from or destroy you in the attempt. The aliens launch swarms of ships to battle against your probe.

One particularly outstanding feature of the game is the synchronisation of the graphics with a soundtrack on a separate voice recorder. This gives you a full briefing from Cape Cerever! The first time the game is played

there was a slight lag here though. It was not always easy to synchronise the voice tape with the play tape.

Monochrome is a fast machine code game with player missile graphics, redefined character sets, fine scrolling and impressive sound effects.

The game has three phases. To score each of the three moonbases, the player must pass a docking phase — enabled by awareness of aliens and the nearby moon — and if successful, transport to the surface of each moon for a phase which involves defending the base against various formations of aliens.

In addition there are seven skill levels — from novice to galactic wizard — with variations in scoring and reserve ships. Some hidden features are also promised, although I never managed to survive long enough to experience them.

Moonbase Io runs on an Atari 400 or 800 in 16K and requires a joystick controller and can be obtained from Computersoft at £24.95.

- Getting started 6
- Value 6
- Playability 7



**PET**  
A space mayday message brings a swift response from your mothership in Space Rescue!

Four spherical life support pods are stranded on hazardous alien terrain in this Pet game and your job is to bring them safely aboard the ship.

Out of the rescue hatch goes the ship's recovery shuttle which is controlled by means of the Pet's keypad. The shuttle is released by pressing "Z" to move it planetwards and from this moment your score increases by one for every second you survive.

To rescue a pod, the shuttle must be positioned immediately above it, and the "A" key pressed. This manoeuvre can be difficult on the higher skill levels since the shuttle moves quickly but the control key is responsive.

Next, the shuttle should be guided to a position just above the mothership and the pod dropped through the rescue hatch by pressing "D". If you miss the pod drops back to the planet's surface.

On saving all five pods, you are invited to dock with the mothership for a bonus of 500 points and then it's on to the next skill level to try and repeat your hard-earned rescue.

Spacecraft has succeeded in creating another addictive game purely because it is so hard to master. It costs £8.

- Getting started 5
- Value 7
- Playability 6



# NOVELTY GAMES

BBC

Can you throw the switch that stops the robot before he blasts you? That's the challenge issued by Viking Software of Bournemouth on their latest tape for the BBC B - oddly enough called Robot!

You control a little man being shot at by a big robot. Unfun, I hear you shout. The little man can save himself by dodging the robot until he gets to the bottom of the screen where there's an OFF switch which will immobilise the metal monster.

This is an addictive game - although it's a bit slow having been written in Basic. It costs £4.95.

- Getting started 7
- Value 7
- Playability 7

APPLE

A belligerent old soldier refuses to leave his wartime enclave high in the Caenon Blitz Hills.

For him the war still rages and he will swallow anyone who passes below with cannon balls. You must dodge the cannon balls and escape to the next level where a balloon is waiting to carry you safely out of range.

At the third level of this game you have to jump from platforms onto a moving escalator which takes you little man to the top of the hill where he can meet with the old soldier.

A game of impressive graphics with obvious associations with the popular arcade game Donkey Kong. Cannon Ball Blitz is available from Spider Software at £19.95 on disc for the Apple II.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



ATARI

Pogoman will make you jump with joy. The idea of the game is to make Pogoman jump up and put out the street lights. Points are awarded for each lamp blacked out.

Move the joystick slightly to the right and Pogoman will do a little bunny hop

## Cute is crucial

The video game business in America has well gone recently been referred to as the recessive profit industry.

Its sales-earning growth over the last few years has been due to the large part to the wizardry and imagination of the games designers.

As well as the all-gorgeous "shoot-'em-up" space games we have had exciting adventure games like Tellektron and Space Dungeon and more recently sheer funosity with Donkey Kong and Frogger and versions based on these novelty games are now available for most of the popular micros.

There is no need to reiterate just how straight copies of arcade hits. There are no rules for novelty games. The only restriction is

the breadth of imagination on the part of the programmers and game designers.

Despite this there are some common elements which you should look for, for which will collectively contribute to a good game.

Good graphics are by definition crucial to the success of novelty games. The characters must be cute or pliable, well defined, and above all central to the general theme of the game.

Sound effects can often make or break novelty games. Some of the new arcade machines excel here, such as Pang for example, with a trio of fat dancing baby penguins who do a little somersault for you if you get a sufficiently high score. Yet home computer will not be able to provide a song and dance routine but providing the program is a good one, it should be able to produce some impressive sound effects, and this is definitely something to look for when making your purchase.

Graphics, sound, and plot are all important elements of a good novelty game but they can never compensate for a game that basically isn't playable. Look for that little twist in a game which will keep you coming back for more.

EUGENE LACEY

Put the joystick down and you add height to his jump - push up and you stretch him further.

As Pogoman moves down the street past bars, alleys blocks and parked cars a number of obstacles appear in the road in front of him. All these must be jumped over in order for him to continue. The higher he gets the more difficult the obstacles become. A bad swoop down from the sky in try to knock Pogomon off his stick.

There is also a gandy who dashes out from the right hand side of the screen to knock Pogoman down. Pogoman runs on Atari 400 or 800 with versions available on disc or cassette.

It is imported into the UK by Celata Computer of Birmingham and sells at around £20.

- Getting started 9
- Value 6
- Playability 6



These crazy Duke Boys have been making moonshine again and grinning the sordid-up General Lee around Hazzard County leaving the sheriff to a spin.

This game uses reckless driving techniques and a pursuit

You are at the wheel of the souped up Chevy as you drive through farmlands, lanes and twisting country roads.

The sheriff is on your tail and you will need to move smartly to give him the slip or make a spectacular leap across the river and watch his car nosedive into the water as he tries to follow you.

Hazard Run is based on the popular American TV programme The Dukes of Hazzard.

The game is available from Altrixia of Middlesex, running on the Alan 400 and 800 and retailing at £24.95 on disc.

A good novelty game at a little pricey but it does allow you to relive the TV series.

- Getting started 7
- Value 5
- Playability 6



VIC-20

Shadowfax brings one of the most exciting chapters of Lord of the Rings to the screens of your Vic computer.

The game takes its name from Gandalf's horse - the swiftest beast in Middle Earth.

This is your chance to ride Shadowfax as you gallop against the Black Riders of Sauron - the Dark Lord of Mordor.

The idea of the game is to shoot as

many of the advancing Black Riders as possible. To kill the Riders you must release a Thunderbolt by pressing the shift key. Quickly release the key when the bolt is centred on a Black Rider - this will explode the bolt - killing the Rider - which then glows red and disappears.

If you fail to release the key quickly enough the bolt will pass through your target and leave him unharmed.

The graphics are most convincing - particularly the galloping motion of the horses.

A highly original and addictive game Shadowfax is available from Postman Limited of Cheltenham at £9.00.

- Getting started 8
- Value 8
- Playability 8



Hooper is Frogger with a whole lot of differences. The game has undergone some Rabbit Software refinement on its way into 3.5K of memory for the Vic 20.

You still command a hopping creature and it still has to get over a busy road and across a log bridge to one of five bases in a bank to score, but there the similarities end.

This poor amphibian also needs to negotiate parked cars on either side of the road, he has to avoid houses on a grassy verge in the middle of his adventure and finally has to swim the river avoiding the brown logs!

All this and a quickly counting down time limit serve to make the game more difficult than the arcade original, but not as enjoyable.

Froger is rescued by some very audacious sound effects which surround him around the screen with such an air of dampness you feel he's leaving a soggy trail behind him.

The packed cars and houses are in mobile, so add little to the game, five streams of traffic on the road are easily crossed with the two lanes of brown splenders being quite ineffectual.

This leaves the river, which is where the difficulties start. It's a seldom that a tree while route leading to a home base becomes visible in the brown mist. When it does it's usually closed before you get across. So you're left hopping between the logs enclosed on all sides hoping a white space will appear above you.

But the tactic fails down as you are not allowed to hop along the bank of the river to a home base.

Froger costs £9.99.

- Getting started 9
- Value 5
- Playability 4



# ASTEROIDS

## DRAGON

Software for the Dragon 32 is gradually becoming available and arcade fans with one of these new microcomputers will be pleased to see two versions of video game favourites for their machine.

Meteo Run — a version of arcade asteroids — and Breakout are two games on a tape titled Arcade Action produced by Aegis Trading of Brighton.

Loading instructions were supplied on a sheet of computer printout paper. The instructions were short and precise, but the packaging was poor.

The cassette interface of the Dragon has always proved reliable but loading these games turned out to be a long struggle. Breakout defeated this reviewer — and on listening to the recording I found it to be really quiet.

Meteo Run was also a struggle to load — it's a pity it wasn't worth the effort. It is a short program written in Basic. You control a space craft — using the left and right cursor keys — while dodging meteors represented by red graphic blocks. You have to shoot enemy ships using the space bar to fire your laser.

It held my attention for all of two minutes — but being in Basic it can be tested and may be helpful to beginners.

All in all this was a very disappointing package — one not worth the £4.95 price tag.

- Getting started 2
- Value 4
- Playability 3

## ZX81

Electric Pencil Company's version of Asteroids for the ZX81 is the best I have played. It has superb instructions, it is fast, has great graphics and good game options.

The spaceship was cleverly represented by either an 'A', 'V', 'D' or 'C'. Block symbols from keys O, W, E and R were used for 45 degree angles.

There are four sizes of asteroids and these were just about right. These sped varied during the game — getting progressively faster.

The game has live speed levels. Level 3 should satisfy all but those of you who score a billion points for 20p.

There is an option for doubles or singles and the live top scores and names can be displayed.

## Firing to escape

Who can resist blowing up asteroids? To have the careerless about the privacy of your own home is sheer ecstasy!

But what flavour do you prefer? This game has been multiplying at an alarming rate and with as many shots how do you choose?

The first consideration must surely be how fast, there is little point getting either a game that is so slow that it bores you to death or so fast you find it unplayable.

Next consider the controls you are offered, rotate left, rotate right and fire are universal but what of hyperspace and thrust? Is the thrust of the move slow vertically or a true horizontal thrust (turn round and thrust to stop yourself moving).

Then you may consider textures: How many sizes of rock do you get? Two, three or more? How many saucers do you get, do they fit or do they wrap around excess? What does the game look like? Does it have hi-res graphics, colour?

Does it have different attack waves (more rocks each wave)? Does the game have an all-right mode, full scoring, high score, bonus ship?

Finally, does the game have any special features such as particularly interesting graphics, sound or speech?

A game that has most of the above features is likely to be fairly close to the arcade original and give you hours of entertainment.

### HACK EYES

A great game for one or more players, this version of Asteroids is manufactured by the Electric Pencil Company at £3.95.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



**Quicksilver Asteroids** for the ZX81 got off to a bad start as it did not supply any game play instructions.

After a lengthy process of key mashing I managed to locate the correct controls and played a fairly leisurely game.

There were no alien saucers to shoot at for bonus points and the asteroids themselves were just clusters of '0's.

I found it difficult to tell which way I was facing as the ship was represented by a number from 1-8 — depending on which way you're facing. It will take you some time to master the controls.

Responses are fairly fast and you can turn clockwise (7 or 4), anti-clockwise (5 or 6), fire (1 or 0) and to thrust forward (2 or 8).

Flash packaging fails to rescue a potentially mediocre version of this arcade game. It costs £3.95.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



## BBC

**Asteroid Belt** is a version of the popular arcade game asteroids for the BBC model B.

chart — in two arcade style.

You are also provided with a keyboard overlay which, although it seems just like a gimmick, is actually quite useful in Asteroids where you have five controls to concentrate on.

A most playable and authentic version of the hit arcade game.

The game runs on the Spectrum and is available from Quicksilver at £4.95.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



Official Sinclair writers Paice have entered the battle for Spectrum asteroids with Planetsoids.

This game is not quite so close to the arcade original as the Quicksilver version though it is none the less impressive for that.

The game has an excellent fire mechanism — the missiles could be fired in quick succession and tracked that targets swiftly. The game had the essential five features — rotate right, rotate left, fire, thrust and hyperspace.

This version also includes the massive spraying UFOs which really add spice to an Asteroids screen and usually warrant a torrent of abuse after one of their more successful excursions.

One drawback was the lack of motion on the thrust button. This makes the game slightly easier to play but would upset the purists who want to play arcade Asteroids on their own TV sets.

Despite this one reservation, the game plays pretty good Asteroids and is a more than reasonable piece of software for £5.95.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



**Softline Meteors** is the third and final version of asteroids we tested.

It too offers most of the features we have come to expect from the arcade original.

However, the Softline programmers have also tried to get away from the usual asteroid design of craggy white outlines and little size inside. The Softline version features an admirable attempt to simulate the rock-like texture of asteroids.

This version has been written to work with some of the new Spectrum joysticks. An adequately game of Asteroids.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



## SPECTRUM

- 2
- 5 Meteo Storm is a close copy of arcade asteroids for the Sinclair Spectrum.

The asteroids were represented as geometrical line drawings, drifting weightlessly towards your ship.

The game displayed clear instructions on the screen and also showed you the value of the various asteroids and flying saucers on the screen.

The game kept a running total of the high score and also allowed you to enter the initials of the top 10 high scores of the session on a half of lame



# SCRAMBLE

## APPLE

Choplifter is the top selling game in the US for the Apple computer.

Superb graphics and superior game play have shot it to the top of the charts.

You play the part of a helicopter pilot on a mission to rescue hostages trapped inside enemy barracks deep inside hostile territory.

Each time you rescue a hostage the computer emits a high-pitched bleep letting you that the hostage is safely aboard.

You can only carry 10 hostages without overloading the chopper so you will have to make more than one sortie into enemy territory.

The number of hostages rescued and tanks destroyed is recorded at the top of the screen.

The game is best played with joystick although this review played quite an interesting game using paddles. The helicopter can fly backwards, forwards and sideways — learning into a dive most realistically. It is also quite difficult to control and will take you some time to master just as a real helicopter would.

A most addictive game and easy to see why it did so well across the Atlantic.

The game is available from S.B.D. Software and costs £19.95.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



## ZX81

Take up the Gauntlet and tackle a thrilling submarine Scramble challenge for the ZX81.

The object of the game is to fight your way through fortified caves with bombs and a laser gun. You start with three craft and get one more every 6,000 points. These are controlled by "U" key for up and back; "W" for up and forward, "A" down and back, "S" down and forward.

"B" and "M" give you control over your guns and bombs, and the game is quite easy to get to grips with.

You are actively encouraged to make a copy of the game but that hardly proved necessary as the game loaded every frame and the instructions are also very clear.

The first part of the game leaves you

## One way travel

Scramble was one of the hit games of the last Space Invaders boom and still hangs on stubbornly to its price — gasolina le exceeds, guns and motorway services.

Its addictiveness is due to the challenge it sets you to gain laurels. It's not how much you score that concerns the Scramble fan so much as how far he can go. Can you get beyond the yellow zig-zaggers, or the red fireballs? Or have you got into the maze yet, and if so how far have you got into it? Ultimately, however, you shot the robot? This is the supreme test for Scramble aces who have successfully piloted their craft through the treacherous levels.

Any computerised version of this popular arcade game should recreate this graded level of difficulty. This can be achieved by varying the speed of the attacking aliens or the difficulty of the scrapping terrain to be flown over. There must also be some final adversary like the total in the arcade version. It is crucial to be able to move backwards and forwards as well as up and down. Scramble can only really be enjoyed with a joystick. A good version will enable you to bob and weave at the same time.

EUGENE LACY

In the open, then you enter the caverns and look on some aliens. In stage three you encounter the monster and level four has only a narrow channel to fly down. That was as fast as I got (8,300 points if you want to try and beat it). In all there are six phases to the game which requires a 16K Rampack and costs £3.95 from Computerware.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



## VIC-20

Vic Scramble from Terminal Software is a masterpiece of memory conservation. How it ever came to be crammed into the unexpanded Vic's 3.5K is a mystery to me.

The Vic's clear graphics are used to good effect with helicopters, planes or tanks and missiles all convincing. My main quibble was that this game could not be played by joystick but with one exception more than the average joystick can handle, that is perhaps under standable.

As it is, the flight control keys, last, slow, the crucial up and down, are in the "Z" position and take a lot of getting used to. The other controls are laser and bomb.

You are faced with eight challenges in this thrilling and addictive game. First travel overland, bombing as much fuel as you can to keep energy up, blasting missiles and helicopters on the mountaintop stages.

In stage two the meanders back launching into them, stage three takes place in the Wiggy tunnel and that's where I met most of my destructions. Stage four is set in the cavern, stage five on the motorway, stage six takes you over Rockit City, stage seven offers the dreaded city maze and finally a home run that makes up the final challenge.

A very valid attempt to reconstruct the arcade original it costs £7.95. One bug though, a mistaken "shift" combined with "CTRL" (all too easy considering the controls) and the game wanders into the muck of switched character sets.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



## SPECTRUM

Perseid is my pick of Scramble type games for the Spectrum.

It succeeds in being immensely playable yet very difficult and horribly addictive.

Nice touches include a large number of side scrollers which constantly rotate as you fly over them. These are worth more than points, for unless you blow them up, they collect data about your flight path and enable missiles and enemy pathfinders to track you more successfully.

This is shown in a danger level indicator on your console. The more red/orange left opposite the more likely the missiles are to blow you from the sky. There is only one way to reduce the danger level, blowing up the enemy's nuclear bomb store. Four stages in the game before you meet the nuclear bomb HD and try to return to base.

Your controls are very responsive — they need to be — up, down, thrust, brake, fire and bomb.

There has been a lot of careful thought gone into the way the controls work. Thrust and fire are on the same key but operate independently and the whole bottom row of the Spectrum key board is given over to bomb.

You can customise your own Perseid to taste. The game allows you to build up your own scenario with indoor installations, missiles, caverns and steep hillsides. But it is a less consuming exercise so it's well worth saving the finished product.

In view of all the effort on the part of the marvellous Melbourne House programmers, it's a pity they didn't curb their kindness for presentation tech neques a little.

The firing rockets and slow writing out of "Perseid" is pleasant the last time but pales a little when you are keen to get on with the game and improve your score.

But that is my only criticism of a well conceived piece of software.

It runs on the 48K model and costs £8.95.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



## ATARI

Assault is a very well executed derivative of the popular arcade game Scramble.

The object of the game is to pilot your spaceship through underground caverns while avoiding numerous obstacles that are placed in your flight path.

The first obstacles to be overcome are surface to air missiles and the occasional floating mine. On your way through this part of the cavern you pick up more ammunition and fuel. In the second part of the cavern you may have to deal with a whole series of floating mines.

Once through this part you come across a series of airlocks. The only way to get past these is to shoot the middle out of them and manoeuvre your craft through the resulting hole. You may also encounter the occasional enemy lighter who will try to shoot you down.

Each level has a different colour and your craft carries less ammunition due to the higher gravity.

This really is a most impressive game and the English Solitaire Company are to be congratulated.

Airstrike is available from Gemini Electronics at £18.95. The game runs on an Atari 400 and 800 and 16K with a disc version also available.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



# FLIGHT SIMULATION

ATARI

If you have ever wondered what it feels like to be at the controls of a 747 thundering across the Atlantic with a plane full of passengers then wonder no more and give it a try.

Jumbo Jet Pilot challenges you to take off, fly to a selected destination and touch the plane down safely again. Sounds easy? Well just you give it a try.

There are numerous different ways to keep a consistent eye on. Altitude, compass, artificial horizon, pressure gauges, and the instrument landing system - all multicellular flight controls.

The game gives you two screen presentations - the view from the cockpit with dials, and a map showing the layout of the airport and your destination.

To begin you have to fix the plane out on to the runway and then build up speed to the take-off. The sound all sorts are quite impressive during this part of the game as the roar of the engines build up when the plane gathers speed.

My main criticism of the game is that it's rather slow. Once you have successfully taken off and correctly set the bearings for the flight you could almost go and make a cup of tea. It was just like switching over automatically pilot, which may be realistic, but personally I also found it a little boring.

Again on the minus side, if you crash the plane you must go right back to the beginning, taxi out and take off all over again. It would have been better if you could resume where you left off or at least if it had a final approach option.

An impressive piece of programming but I feel could do better for the money.

Jumbo Jet Pilot runs on Amstrad 400 or 800 and is manufactured by Thorne EMI and available from Spectrum computer shops at £34.44.

## w Getting started

## w Value

## w Playability

## Realistic training

Commercial flight simulators are used in the training of airline pilots and are now so good that they provide a genuinely realistic simulation of flying in a jet.

These simulators use large computer systems and cost anything from a few million pounds upwards, but a more modest range of flight simulators are programs for the home computer era now becoming available in the price range £5 to £50!

With all software, paying a higher price will not necessarily buy you a higher quality program. Here are a few features to look for.

The most technically difficult component of a flight simulator is the representation of the outside world. This should include at least the horizon and a representation of a runway - say additional features are bonuses.

Leading a plane on a runway is the most exciting part of flight simulations and it is important that this part is done as well as possible.

Home computers are not capable of displaying a real instrument panel but it is possible to create an impression of a vast number of gauges and dials which give the feel of a real cockpit. Analog displays like gauges and dials in addition to digital displays are more authentic. Interacting and talking is a must.

Landing a plane safely is one of the most difficult tasks the pilot has to perform and this should be exceedingly difficult and instructive in a flight simulation.

CHARLES DAINES

Instrument readings, while the top half is given over to the view from the cockpit. This remains dark until the landing strip lights come into view.

A very simplistic map shows the world outside consisting of a series of hills eight across the screen at a height of 1,650 feet with one small valley to the west of the runway which itself runs east-west.

Above 2,200 feet the airspace is very congested and there is a high risk of collision.

Apart from the map there are six modes to try out: mode 0 is a demo shown over the last  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles of a successful approach; mode 1 leaves you nine miles from touchdown heading west; mode 2 is the same heading west; mode 3 leaves you heading north and mode 4 takes you to take off first. The final mode is an autopilot and shows you how it should be done but allows

you to take over at any time.

As in most simulations there is a wealth of controls and things to consider and it is naturally very confusing.

Raising and lowering the airplane's nose, checking on engine rpm, banking, lowering flaps and landing gear while checking constantly on your heading against the directional beacons on speed, altitude and fuel.

Still it is hardly the most complex of simulations and the right idea does give an excuse to bring the necessary memory down to 16K. It costs £5.65.

## • Getting started

## w Value

## w Playability

ZX81

Flight Simulation is one of the best programs I have even seen for the Sinclair ZX81.

After loading, which takes about six minutes, the program runs a check to see if it has loaded correctly. If it has you may proceed, if not, reload.

The program places you in the pilot's seat of a twin engined propeller plane snatching for the airport beacons in poor visibility.

The game gives you three screen presentations. The view of the horizon as seen from the cockpit. A map of the Mediterranean with landing beacons and the position of sun and moon. Towards your final approach you can also request a visual display of the runway and landing lights.

Newcomers to the game can start off by just playing the final approach part of the game. It is a tough test of your skill and it will take you several attempts to touch down safely. More experienced pilots can select a number of extra difficulty features such as wind effects and tail lift.

When in the cockpit display the top half of the screen shows a view of the cockpit windows while you will see the horizon formed by the sky and the ground. As the altitude of the plane changes, so the vision horizon will move to display the effects of banking, diving and climbing.

Flight Simulation runs on a ZX81 and is available from Paine's W.H. Smith outlets at £9.85.

## • Getting started

## w Value

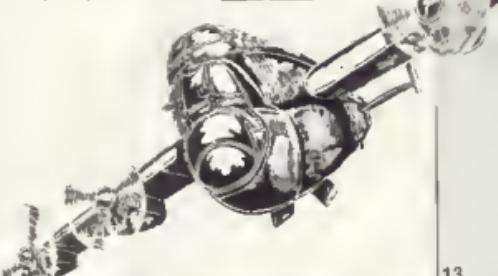
## w Playability

SPECTRUM

The instrument panel comes into its own in Night Flight, because there's not much else to see out of the window, so it's a pitch black.

In Hewson Consultants version of flight simulation you are faced with the problem of landing a light aircraft in the night. The screen is divided into two with the bottom half being taken up by

models to try out: mode 0 is a demo shown over the last  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles of a successful approach, mode 1 leaves you nine miles from touchdown heading west; mode 2 is the same heading west; mode 3 leaves you heading north and mode 4 takes you to take off first. The final mode is an autopilot and shows you how it should be done but allows



# SPORT GAMES

VIC-20

After Soccer is probably going to surprise most of its purchasers.

The program for the Vic 20 claims to be "The weirdest game of soccer you'll ever played". It lives up to that claim but not in the way the player would hope, being more reminiscent of pinball than football.

The aliens up there all right, two blue ones on your side set about a goal's width apart and four green ones facing you on the far side of the screen.

On the pitch itself are five large pink creatures which are unmovable and act much in the same way as bumpers on a pinball.

A ball is served up, flicked on usually by the two sets of green invaders as they bounce up and down between the top and bottom of the screen, then bounces into the large pink variety lunging about before heading it out towards your side of the screen which must be protected by your own two aliens.

Send it back if you can, I certainly found it hard to use my two defences in good effect and the game was over within seconds as a rule. There are live skill levels but level one looked impossible and level one was quite hard enough.

After a while leaping invaders appear on the screen creating further havoc.

The good break-out expert play may annoy the game but it was beyond me and the title is sadly misleading.

It costs £P 29 from Rabbit Software.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability

ATARI

The Harlem Globetrotters themselves would be hard pressed to pull off some of the incredible leaps and shots that are possible in Atari computer simulated Basketball.

The game offers you five play options. You can take on the computer with one or two players or team up with a friend to play against the computer.

Best of all play against a friend as the computer plays an extremely tough game of basketball.

You men are moved around the court using the joystick. Pressing the Inv button will make you play leap or, if he's in possession of the ball, shoot at the basket.

The graphics are quite impressive on

## Artful animations

Most computers acquire a library of sports simulations after they have been around for some time.

The Atari here has several sports titles from standard soccer and basketball type games to more esoteric indoor sports such as darts and snooker.

Graphics are important in sports simulation. Look for accurately marked pitches, thoughtful scaling, and authentic movement of the ball. In games that involve a lot of running, look for authentic simulation of the running motion of the players. Walking is more ridiculous than a player meandering around a sports hall without moving his legs.

Of course, computers are not yet sophisticated enough to reproduce all the elements of a game on a TV screen but they are easily capable of giving an enjoyable game if the cartridge has been well thought out. It should have two player options and a set difficulty to play against the computer when your friend is set around.

The two player option if it is to be really attractive should allow for simultaneous participation by two players.

Finally, sound effects are also important in sports simulation. Check to see what the computer produces some audio signal whenever the ball is struck or kicked and also when a goal is pain in the seat. Some of the better sports simulations have authentic sounding effects such as a leather ball being kicked, or the shouting of fans, even the cheering of the crowd has been incorporated in some games.

All these things help to make a good game. The golden rule, however, is with buying all computer games, is to play them first whenever possible.

EUGENE LACEY

the game — the men's limbs move and the ball moves across court in slow motion to give the impression of depth.

Basketball runs on Atari 400 and 800 and comes out of Atari catalogue in cartridge form at £19. Spectrum computer shop at £24.99.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



Scenes the winner in the FA Cup final with this latest soccer simulation game and a little bit of imagination.

You control up to four players moving them around the pitch with the joystick and depressing the Inv button to shoot.

Up to four players can be moved at any time — the player possessing the ball dictates which of the eleven players in the team can be moved.

The depth and scale of the pitch are well mimicked with players appearing at just about the right size.

Sound effects are another plus for the game with the sound of a dull thud as the players strike the leather ball.

A variety of game options increase the appeal of the game. You can select a 10 minute, 30 minute, or 45 minute game against the computer or a friend.

Soccer is manufactured by Thorne EMI for the Atari 400 and 800 and is available from Spectrum computer shop at £29.99.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



About the only thing missing from Thorne EMI's darts program is the TV commentator's shrill of, "Was that hundred and eighty?"

The game, for the Atari 400/800, takes place inside a public house with a keg, and gather six looking, darts player standing a regulation distance away from his board.

When the game is in play, the marvellous graphics are added to by a close up of the board itself in the bottom right hand side of the screen with a hand hovering close by.

An eye catching feature of the game is the sound effects which, if you let a wire and bounce out, respond with a metallic clink and thud.

You begin play by selecting a game from 301 to 801 and choosing a skill level between 0 and 9. The hand holding the dart hovers over the board and you have to judge carefully when to fire as the finger tips hit the part you think you want.

Darts costs £19.95, expensive for a cassette despite the good packaging.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability



TT Racer brings you all the thrills and spills of the Isle of Man super bike races.

The game challenges you to race against the clock and see how far you can get along an obstacle laden race track.

Push your joystick forward to accelerate — but not too far or you will crash straight into the crowd leaving time.

The track scrolls down the screen as you are shown an aerial view — including rooftops and trees. The track becomes increasingly more difficult.

The sound effects are an impressive element of this game. The acceleration sounds are particularly convincing.

The first major obstacle you must negotiate is a fork junction with an oil slick on one side and clean track on the other. You must make a quick decision on your course and then accelerate away before the slick switches back under your tyres!

Once through this you will have to steer over narrow bridges, wait at traffic lights, and dodge in and out of squares given obstacles.

Within a minute has elapsed the game ends and you are given a score lead out based on how far you got.

TT Racer is the first of a range of sports simulations for Atari 400 and 800 from Centaursoft at £19.95.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability

8  
5  
7

## SPECTRUM

If you like pretty pretty graphics then House Goes Slime may be just the game for you.

The cute comic book character was first introduced to Spectrum owners last year when Prawn Software launched their Hungry Hungry game. In that episode the mischievous little gobbler ate the park attendant's sandwiches and prize winning daisies.

The game begins with Horace attempting to get across a busy road as lorries, vans and cars thunder by. You must get him to the other side of the road without getting him killed. You have three lives in which to do this.

Once he is safely across the road he can pick up his skis from his shed, put them on, hobble back across the road and then begin his attempt on the slopes.

The first few flags are widely spaced and can be taken near and gently. The game gets progressively difficult.

Splendid graphics, an addictive game, and a lovable character in the shape of Horace all for £5.

Horace Goes Slime runs on a Spectrum in 16 or 48K and is distributed by Paison in W.H. Smiths.

- Getting started
- Value
- Playability

8  
8  
7

# ADDRESS FILE

**Abrax Software**  
20, Ashley Court, Ginal Northway,  
London NW4.

**Abersoft**  
7 Mans Alston, Bow Street, Dyley  
SY24 5BA.

**Acornsoft**  
44 Market Hill, Cambridge, CB2 3NJ

**Allrian**  
1000 Uxbridge Road, Hayes, Middx  
UB4 0RL.

**Apex Software**  
115 Crescent Drive, Brighton, Sussex  
BN2 6SB

**Artic Computing**  
398 James Rechit Avenue, Hull, N  
Humberside HU8 CJA

**Atari International**  
Windsor House, 185-195 Ealing  
Road, Alperton, Wembley, Middlesex.  
(Any Atari Dealer)

**Andigenin**  
PO Box 88, Rnading, Berks.

**Antamata Cartography**  
85a Osborne Road, Portsmouth,  
Hants PO5 3JR.

**BBC Publications**  
Broadcasting House, Portland Place,  
London W1. (Any BBC Dealer)

**Bridge Software**  
36 Farwood, Maple Bridge,  
Stockport, Cheshire.

**Bug Byte**  
The Albany, Old Hall Street, Liverpool  
L3 9EG.

**Camphill Systems**  
Rous Road, Brichurst Hill, Essex IG9  
6BA

**Centami Software**  
B Purcell Avenue, Edgware, Middlesex

**Centaursoft**  
26 Great Cornbury, Halesowen, West  
Mids B8 3AA.

**Commodore**  
675 Ajax Avenue, Trading Estate,  
Slough, Berks. (Any Commodore  
Dealer)

**Computer Concepts**  
Dept WM1, 16 Wayside,  
Chippingfield, Herts WD4 9JU

**Elektra Facial Company**  
1 Mount Vernon, Hull, N. Humberside

**Gemini Electronics**  
50 Newton Street, Manchester

**Hewson Consultants**  
80a St Mary's Street, Wallingford,  
Oxon. OX10 0EL.

**Imagina Software**  
Masons Buildings, Exchange Street  
East, Liverpool L2 3PN

**Man Games**  
See Morris Associates for this  
address

**Malbonine House**  
131 Tredegar Road, Greenwich,  
London SE10

**Micron**  
52 The Strand Worthing, Sussex

**Milimark**  
1 Banchish Road, Town Hall Square,  
Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex

**Morris Associates**  
37 St Catherines Road, Baglan, Port  
Talbot, West Glam. SA12 8AJ

**New Generation Software**  
16 Brandon Close, Oldland Common,  
Brent

**Pala & Pam Computers**  
New Hall Hey Road, Rawtenstall  
Rossendale, Lancs BB4 5JB

**Postline Limited**  
PO Box 2, Andoverford, Cheltenham,  
Glos GL4 5SW

**Program Power**  
81a Regent Street, Chapel Allerton,  
Leeds LS7 4PE

**Paten**  
2 Hanworth Mews, London NW1  
6DD (Large Branches at W.H.  
Smith)

**Quicksilva**  
92 Northern Road, Southampton SO2  
DPS.

**Rabbit Software**  
380 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex

**Salamander**  
27 Ditchley Rose, Brighton, East  
Sussex BN1 4QL

**Sherpsoft**  
8090 Paul Street, London EC1

**Softkey**  
329 Croydon Road, London SE24

**Spender Software**  
88 Aventole Road, South Croydon,  
Surrey

**Supersoft**  
Winchester House, Canning Road,  
Walldown, Harrow, Middlesex

**S.E.D. Software**  
15 Jocelyn Road, Richmond, Surrey  
TW9 2TJ

**Terminal Software**  
28 Church Lane, Prestwich,  
Manchester M25 5AJ

**Taxas Instruments**  
Manton Lane, Bedford, Beds. MK41  
7PA (Any Taxas Dealer)

**Thom EMi**  
Thom EMi House, Upper St Martins  
Lane, London W1. (Any Atari Dealer)

**Viking Software**  
25 New Road, Northbourne,  
Bournemouth, Dorset BH10 7OS

**Waltorco**  
140 Warden Avenue, Luton, Beds  
LU1 5HR.

## Ratings rundown

Here is a rundown of the categories our review team used to mark the games featured in this supplement.

Each game received ratings in three categories. These are defined as "Getting started"; problems loading the tape and a measure of how much help a cassette or disc gives, in making the game easily accessible to the buyer.

"Value" looks at the value for-

money question and takes into account whether the game utilises all the facilities of the machine, presentation and packaging.

"Playability" refers to the enjoyment the game offers, whether it would hold the reviewers' interest or whether it is a good example of the type of game it is based on.

Each mark was made out of a possible 10 and we hope it will provide an accurate guide.

## Symbols guide

The symbols beneath each review provide a quick check on what you will need to run that particular game on your computer. See the details below:



1. The game is available on cassette only. Not in disc or cartridge form.



2. The game is available in disc form only and not on cassette or cartridge.



3. The game needs extra memory to run. For X181 owners this will mean a 16K Rampack. For Atom owners we will assume a fully expanded computer as the norm.



4. The game uses a joystick.



5. The game needs something extra plugged in the user port to run. This symbol has also been used to show cartridge-only games.

### THE BOOK OF REVIEWS

A supplement of Computer & Video Games magazine, March 1983.

Edited by Eugene Lacey, Production Editor: Tim McNeilly; Design: Linda Freeman, Editorial: Pauline Lavelle, Advertising: Susan Cameron.

Editorial address: Dursey House, 8 Heriot Hill, London EC1R 5JN Telephone: 01 278 6556

Special thanks to Charles Davis, Paul Mark Ester, Dickie, Pat Watts, Mike Keith, Campbell, Martin Cross, Jim Dave, Terry Rogers and Dave McTaggart.

Computer & Video Games is published & distributed by FM&P National Publications, Lewisham.

Typeset by Blue Twining Limited and Printed by Edinburgh Standard Limited.

Computer & Video Games Limited ISBN 0281 3087

Cover photograph: Linda Freeman



# GAMES GLOSSARY

## Asteroids

The Asteroids comes into the episodes courtesy of Atari. It features a small diamond-shaped craft controlled by the player which can rotate left or right and thrust or fire in the direction it is facing.

There is one further control, the panic button 'Hyperspace' which lets you travel to another part of the screen should the computer.

The enemy is mainly made up of large asteroids which sweep across the screen in large deadly groups of risk. When blown up these break into smaller fragments worth extra points.

There is extra danger supplied by two UFOs. The first flying creature you'll meet fairly early on. It tends to spray shots in all directions and often scratches into an asteroid.

The smaller variety is far more deadly to its own shooting and also more difficult to hit. Each cleared screen means you start again with extra asteroids.

## Defender

You can't expect to keep a finger on every control button in Defender or you'd end up in knots.

The action, which takes place above an alien landscape involves some seven control buttons and takes patience to gain proper mastery of your little craft.

That patience can be rewarded though as Defender is challenging from the word 'Go'. The Defender craft can go up, down, thrust forward, reverse direction, fire, smart bomb and hyperspace.

Ten hominoids wander on the land scape and have may fell prey to raiding alien creatures known as Landers. Landers pick up the hominoids and take them to the lag of the screen. If they succeed in getting there the Landers turn up to leave some mutant hellbent on your destruction.

In all there are six alien opponents. On top of Landers and Mutants, these are Poles who are quite harmless but contain the smell and personality. Swimmers; Bombers send swipes with white bombs and Barriers only appear if you take too long clearing a screen at the rest of the aliens.

If all 10 hominoids are captured, the planet explodes and all remaining aliens attack your craft at once.

Defender games usually feature a small radar screen which shows what is going on at all parts of the planet surface.

## Frogger

Frogger has spawned a whole host of computer games with a similar theme.

The game features a frog hero who

if you can tell a Pacman from a Defender and a Galaxians from a Space Invader you probably know your way around computer games.

One of some of the game terms we have used in this supplement, or in the issue itself, are new to you, then this gloss should supply the answers. In it we take some of the best known types of computer game and describe how they are played and what features these games normally incorporate.

So, if we claim that Pantracers is a "Scramble-type game" and that leaves you just as much in the dark about what to expect, then below there is a full description of Scramble to put you in the picture.

must jump across a road and make his way across a river to run to live frog holes in the bank.

The busy road usually features five streams of traffic travelling in both directions at varying speeds, between which the player must hop his frog without wrapping it around any fenders.

Once across the road, the frog can be stressed by leaping onto floating logs and onto the back of swimming turtles, until our frog can enter a recent spot in the far bank. Turtles have a habit of diving though so don't let a log drift too long on one. Being carried off the edge of the screen by log or turtle also results in a note in the funeral solemn of *Amphibians' Wreath*.

When all five frog-holes have been filled, the game becomes more difficult with extra traffic being added to the road, snakes, inverting the bank between road and river and alligators appearing instead of logs in the river.

A timer running down on each frog also adds to the difficulties. The arcade original also featured a small lady frog who could be "picked up" on the bags and offered a lift home for a bonus. Other bonuses can be scored by entering a frog hole in which a testy fly meal has come to rest.

## Donkey Kong

Donkey Kong is the strange name for a climbing and jumping game which features a starlet grabbing monster gorilla.

Often referred to as Zang Kong or Cray Climber in the computer circles, it has only just found its way into the home version.

The game features a gorilla holding a girl captive at the top of the screen and an injured hero (Mario the carpenter), who starts at the bottom of the screen.

Between the two is a connecting net work of platforms and ladders up which Mario must run to achieve his rescue. Kong barrels down the action and Mario makes use of his "jump" ability to leap over them. He can also grab a hammer and smash the barrels as they approach him.

Once at the top of the screen a new complex is built with Mario, again starting from the bottom with a view to rascals. This time the screen features a series of conveyor belts and deadly fires which travel around on the ladders and belts.

## Galaxians

The Galaxians were the sons of Space invaders, instead of proceeding down the screen at a leisurely pace they swooped at the top of the screen before swooping down in batches of two or three for more often on a solo mission? firing bombs.

The player has the usual left, right and fire controls on his laser base and must take care not to get trapped in a corner. He scores double points for a galaxian hit in mid-swoop and there are bonus points for taking out the red laser beam menders, who usually descend flanked by their generals, dispensing bombs at such a rate that the first mender is to fire for cover.

That is the essence of Galaxians but with each destroyed platoon, new waves appear at screen top and then attacks become more frequent more accurate and, all too often, more deadly!

## Pacman

The ghoulish world of Pacman is made up of a dot-filled maze, a hungry dot eater and four pursuing spectres.

Pacman variations can be found under a wide range of titles from Van men to Gobbler, Snapper to Super Gooper and many others. Most dot eating games are related to it.

The main character is the dot eater, which travels around the maze, eating every dot it touches. His objective is to clear the screen of dots. He is hampered in this by the four slithering ghosts whose touch is lethal.

The Pacman's main defence against the ghosts, who usually number four, are energiser dots. These points in the four corners of the maze and, upon being eaten, reverse the roles for a short while.

This means that Pacman can turn the tables on the ghosts and eat them for bonus points. He is allowed only a few seconds of dominance before the usual hunger and limited rules come back into operation.

It is also usual for fruits to appear on the screen occasionally and these too can be consumed by Pacman for bonus points. When Pacman has cleared the screen, it totals with dots and the game rewards a result except that this time the ghosts are a little livelier and a new fruit worth extra points appears at this level.

## Scramble

Scramble should have a big one way sign on its cabinet! The screen rolls from right to left, taking the player's craft along it into ever increasing danger.

Scramble variations often centre the word "Mission" or "Attack" but there are some weird and wonderful titles about.

The player controls a craft heading right across the screen over hilly terrain. His craft can never turn around and opt out of its mission but he does have some control over his destiny.

His controls are up and down, fast and slow and he can both bomb and fire at his enemies.

The Scrambler is not usually equipped with enough fuel to complete his task, but it is normal to obtain more fuel by bombing fuel tanks on the ground and so mysteriously replenish his own stocks.

The enemies seem in all shapes and sizes. Most common are missiles which fire up from the ground as your craft passes overhead and when invaded creatures which frequently inhabit caves and fly at the player's craft.

The original Scramble game sent the player through a series of different terrains with new challenges in each section. And most computer Scrambles attempt to duplicate this with a number of different stages.

Scramble requires a cool head which can find the right control in a crisis, but it makes an ideal computer game as success naturally leads to new and more difficult stages.

## Invaders

Space Invaders started the whole computer game craze back in 1977 and most gamers know the format back words. Still, just a brief resume.

The invaders come in waves above the ground and move in rows across the screen one step at a time, firing missiles earthwards.

When one row of the aliens reach an edge of the screen, the whole platoon jumps down a line and return back the way they came. When they achieve their slow progression to the bottom of the screen, the game ends.

The player sits in a lax base which moves left to right and fires directly up from its position. His aim is to blow up the entire fleet before it reaches the bottom of the screen.

Flying screens move across the top of the screen in both directions and can be hit for a mystery bonus score. In the arcade original, top scorer scores of 300 were achieved by living 22 shots before shooting at the last screen, then firing 14 shots in between each subsequent screen. Some computer versions have copied this technique.

